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ABSTRACT

This report contains recommendations made by the Arizona Committee on Decentralization, who identified issues in the implementation of decentralization in Arizona's public schools. The report presents an overview of the definition and purposes of decentralization and findings of a survey of 4,100 Arizona public school teachers and principals conducted in January 1993. A majority of both teachers and principals believed that students would be best served if decisions were made at the school site. The committee agreed on the need to create a legal climate for schools and districts to pursue decentralization, but disagreed as to whether decentralization should be voluntary or mandatory. Specific recommendations are offered around the issues of formation of a school decentralization committee, participation, plan components, amendments, exceptions, and noncompliance. Specific recommendations for charter schools are also outlined in the areas of purpose, application, operation, length of charter renewal, admission requirements, financial provisions, transportation provisions, and creation of a Stimulus Fund. A list of committee members and contributors is included. Appendices contain a list of barriers to decentralization and selected survey data. (LMI)

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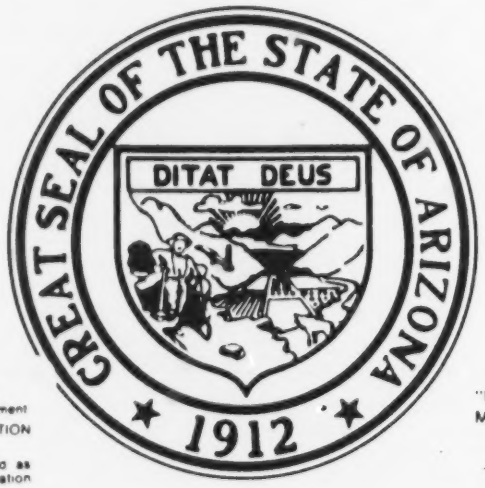
ED 381 873

REPORT
of the
SUPERINTENDENT'S
COMMITTEE ON DECENTRALIZATION



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C. Diane Bishop, Superintendent
March 1994

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CONTENTS

Page

Introduction - Superintendent Bishop ii

Acknowledgments iv

Report of the Committee on Decentralization

Definition of Decentralization 1

Purposes of Decentralization 1

Statements of Consensus About Decentralization 2

Barriers to Decentralization (Refer to Appendix A) 4

Decentralization Survey 4

Summary of Recommendations

General Recommendations 6

Specific Recommendations 6

Decentralization 6

Charter Schools 8

Areas of Concern/Disagreement 15

Appendices 18

Appendix A: Barriers to Decentralization 18

Appendix B: Selected Charts and Graphs From the Decentralization Survey 20

INTRODUCTION

Based on continuing calls for educational improvement and the widespread interest in decentralization as a vehicle for change, I determined there was a need to discuss the subject from both philosophical and practical perspectives, to review rules and regulations governing schools, and to formulate recommendations for facilitating decentralization in the public schools.

To that end, I formed the Committee on Decentralization in August 1992, and invited a group of 26 thoughtful, articulate, progressive-minded individuals known for their dedication to education, to join me in discussing issues related to decentralization. Committee members were chosen to represent a cross-section of school personnel, parents, community members, and policy makers. This document reflects the efforts of the Committee to craft recommendations on decentralization.

I believe that the purpose of decentralization and accompanying activities is to enhance teaching and learning, and that change must occur for that reason rather than just for the sake of making changes. I encouraged the Committee to focus on what occurs in the classroom, and to identify options for creating the best teaching and learning environments possible.

In an effort to forge meaningful recommendations, the Committee actively pursued information and input about decentralization in Arizona and elsewhere. Representatives of schools and others involved in the development and implementation of decentralization activities made presentations to the committee. Teachers and principals statewide were surveyed to provide data about decentralization in Arizona. The Committee participated in facilitated processes to identify issues, establish consensus, and develop recommendations.

It quickly became evident that, try as they might, the Committee was not going to reach agreement or consensus on all points, not because of an inability to do so but rather because of the complexity of decentralization issues and the emotional context surrounding them. I believe it is significant that the Committee, with each of its esteemed members committed to the goal of improving education, was unable to arrive at agreement about some specific aspects of decentralization. It seems clear that the points of contention create a foundation for continuing deliberations about decentralization and education reform.

While there was general agreement for the need to create a legal climate and options for schools and districts who wish to pursue decentralization, a major point of disagreement by Committee members was whether decentralization should be voluntary or mandatory. As an interesting outgrowth of that discussion, Committee members determined that most of the goals they sought through decentralization could be achieved through the establishment of Charter Schools or comparable entities. Consequently, the Committee considered parameters that might guide the development and implementation of such schools, and those parameters are included in this report.

The Committee on Decentralization offers this report and its accompanying recommendations to school personnel, business and community members, and policy makers for the purposes of providing information and insights about decentralization and improving education in Arizona. I am most grateful to members of the Committee on Decentralization for their participation in this effort and for their commitment to improving education in Arizona.

C. Diane Bishop
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

March 1994

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON DECENTRALIZATION

C. Diane Bishop, Chair
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Kathy Back
Director of Instructional Technology
Former Principal, Camelback High School
Phoenix Union High School District

Dr. James Buchanan
Superintendent
Tempe Union High School District

Mr. Laverne Carrillo
Support Staff
Washington Elementary School District

Dr. Paul Karlowicz
Teacher, University High School
Tucson Unified School District

Mr. Art Lebowitz
Director of Curriculum
Former Principal, South Mountain High School
Phoenix Union High School District

Ms. Julie Letofsky
Teacher, Kyrene de los Lagos School
Kyrene Elementary School District

Dr. Joseph Martin
Superintendent
Kayenta Unified School District

Ms. Carolyn Repp
Teacher, Arcadia Neighborhood Learning Center
Scottsdale Unified School District

Mr. David Silva
Former County School Superintendent
Apache County

Ms. LaVern Tarkington
Principal, McClintock High School
Tempe Union High School District

Dr. Beatriz Arias
Parent Representative
Scottsdale Unified School District

Mr. Ken Bennett
State Board of Education
Arizona Department of Education

Mr. Jim Binns
Business Representative
Tempe, AZ

Ms. Donna Calvert
Parent Representative
Tucson Unified School District

Ms. Jean Donaldson
Former Governing Board Member
Washington Elementary School District

Mr. Michael Donovan
Governing Board Member
Yuma Elementary School District

Dr. John Hosmer
State Board of Education
Arizona Department of Education

Mr. Rick Lavis
Business Representative
Phoenix, AZ

Mr. Anthony Mason
Business Representative
Phoenix, AZ

Mr. Carl Newman
Parent Representative
Washington Elementary School District

Ms. Onnie Shekerjian
Parent Representative
Kyrene Elementary School District

The Honorable Chris Cummiskey
House of Representatives
Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Lisa Graham
House of Representatives
Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Bev Hermon
State Senate
Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Joe Eddie Lopez
House of Representatives
Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Tom Patterson
State Senate
Arizona Legislature

DRAFTING SUBCOMMITTEE

A special thanks is extended to the following persons who assisted in drafting this report for review and consideration by the full Committee.

Mr. Ken Bennett
Mr. Jim Binns
Dr. James Buchanan
Ms. Donna Calvert
Ms. Jean Donaldson
Dr. John Hosmer
Dr. Paul Karlowicz
Mr. Art Lebowitz
Ms. Carolyn Repp
Ms. Onnie Shekerjian

OTHER

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Arizona Business Leadership for Education
Arizona Congress of Parents and Teachers
Arizona Education Association
Arizona Federation of Teachers
Arizona School Administrators
Arizona School Boards Association
Morrison Institute for Public Policy
Pima County Collaborative

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF

Ms. Nancy Mendoza
Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Judy Richardson
Associate Superintendent
Support Services

Ms. Sheila Breecher
Education Program Specialist
Special Education

Dr. Linda Fuller
Director
Arizona Career Ladder Program

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DECENTRALIZATION

DEFINITION OF DECENTRALIZATION

To decentralize in the educational setting is to shift the locus of and authority for making decisions which directly impact students from the district level to the local school staff, parents, students, and community.

PURPOSES OF DECENTRALIZATION

A. To increase student achievement.

B. To support the involvement and empowerment of parents, community members, and school faculty and staff in decision making at the school level.

C. To encourage and support school-based programs and innovations which meet the distinct and unique needs of students.

D. To attract and retain quality educators.

BELIEFS RELATED TO DECENTRALIZATION

A. Structures

There is a need:

1. To address and remove real and perceived barriers which prevent decentralization from occurring.

2. To create tolerance for different visions and needs.

3. For communities, districts and schools to make a commitment to training, communication and collaborative decision making.

4. For education funding to follow students in the public schools system.

5. For the state and the school districts to focus on and commit to appropriate and adequate training for school personnel, parents and community members as they take on new roles and responsibilities.

B. Student Learning

1. Accountability for student learning must be based on high, uniform state standards for achievement and other performance measures.

2. The rights of all students must be protected.

3. The state's role is to specify performance outcomes, but not the methods and processes to accomplish them.

C. Attitudes/Atmosphere

1. The inherent resistance to and fear of change must be addressed through information, communication and training.

2. Issues related to a lack of trust, shifts in authority and power, and fears of despotism must be acknowledged and addressed.

3. The beliefs that uniformity must be maintained at all costs, that the whole system must change or nothing can change, that equity equals sameness, must be challenged and discussed.

4. The unsettling satisfaction with maintaining the status quo must be countered.

5. The resistance to change based on the belief that "this too shall pass" must be dispelled.

STATEMENTS OF CONSENSUS ABOUT DECENTRALIZATION

A. There are ***multiple ways to achieve decentralization***, including at least the following situations:

1. A district and its schools initiate a program without external motivation or incentive.

2. An external legislative incentive model:

   a. Motivates a district and its schools to initiate a program;

   b. Motivates a school within a district to initiate a program (the Restructuring Pilot Project as an example); and/or

   c. Authorizes the creation of Charter Schools.

B. Decentralization should be a ***voluntary*** strategy that districts and schools may use for the purpose of facilitating change and improvement in education.

C. Decentralization should be an ***available and potential option*** for all districts and schools with the interest, desire and willingness to undertake it.

D. Decentralization should be based on ***locally developed (district/school) plans*** which are in accordance with state structures and guidelines founded on accountability for results.

E. Decentralization should be ***supported and encouraged at the state level*** by the Legislature and the State Board of Education through:

1. The implementation of regulatory changes, amendments, and waivers which address and/or remove barriers associated with decentralization.

2. Continued efforts to define and implement high performance standards for students as well as accountability measures for districts, schools and staff.

3. Efforts to gather and disseminate data and information relative to existing decentralization models and sites in Arizona and elsewhere.

4. The provision and availability of technical assistance for districts and schools, perhaps through implementation of a Regional Service Center concept.

5. A focus on and commitment to appropriate and adequate training for school personnel, parents and community members as they take on new roles and responsibilities.

6. Incentives for districts to decentralize, such as grants for training and waivers from regulations based on accountability for student achievement.

7. Opportunities and incentives for individual schools to decentralize when the district opts not to do so, such as obtaining status as a state Charter School and waivers from regulations based on accountability for student achievement.

F. Decentralization should be ***supported and encouraged at the local level*** by governing boards and district administrative offices through:

1. Implementation of changes in policies, procedures and negotiated agreements which address and/or remove barriers associated with decentralization.

2. Establishment of a waiver process.

3. Decentralization of funding and resources.

4. Development and implementation of appropriate and adequate training for school personnel, parents, and community members.

BARRIERS TO DECENTRALIZATION

A summary of the barriers to decentralization identified by the Committee on Decentralization is included in Appendix A.

DECENTRALIZATION SURVEY

The following information is derived from *Attitudes About Decentralization: A Survey of Arizona Teachers and Principals*, Research and Development Division, Arizona Department of Education, September 1993. Selected graphs from this report are included in Appendix B.

More than 4,100 public school teachers and principals were surveyed in January 1993 concerning the issue of school decentralization. In addition to assessing who currently holds real decision making authority in Arizona's schools, the survey probed teachers and principals about how decentralized decision making might change education. Separate survey instruments were developed for the two groups, taking into consideration special concerns of teachers and principals, but allowing considerable overlap for meaningful comparisons. Surveys were comprised of multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

Responses to the surveys indicated that a majority of both teachers and principals believed that students would be best served if decisions were made at the school site, with the exception of determining salaries. Teachers were identified by both respondent groups as appropriate decision makers with regard to school curriculum issues. Generally, both principals and teachers indicated that state and district entities have too much influence over virtually all educational issues. More than 30 percent of teachers and 20 percent of principals indicated that no steps toward restructuring had been taken at their schools.

Highlights of Decentralization Survey Results

- Educators who currently manage various decisions at their school sites are more satisfied than educators who do not determine education decisions at school sites.

- The majority of teachers believed that student interests would be best served if decisions were made at the school site regardless of the issue in question. With the exceptions of determinations of salaries and organization of transportation for students, principals likewise indicated that student interests would be best served if decisions were managed at the school site.

- Both teachers and principals indicated that influence should be greater for parents and community members and school-site committees as well as for themselves than it is currently on virtually all issues presented.

- Teachers clearly indicated that they were not prime decision makers on issues of personnel and money, but that they controlled curriculum to a greater extent. Conversely, principals indicated they influenced personnel issues and allocation of funds within their schools, but had only limited influence over curriculum.

- Twenty percent of principals and 30 percent of teachers indicated they did not believe they had the authority to maximize student learning.

- The majority of teachers expressed dissatisfaction on only two issues, allocation of funds within their schools and determination of teacher salaries. The majority of principals expressed satisfaction on all issues surveyed.

- The majority of principals believed their influence was adequate on virtually all education issues; teachers felt their influence was inadequate over typical administrative issues; both groups reflected they had little control over salaries.

- A moderate to strong relationship exists between satisfaction and influence over education issues for both principals and teachers.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee on Decentralization supports the following principles:

A. Genuine consideration of decentralization by districts and schools which allows decentralization to the extent that (1) parents, teachers and other school personnel, students and community members choose to exercise such powers, and (2) the assumption of such powers does not violate state or federal laws.

B. Development of a system whereby (1) centralized services and funding are maintained for the support and benefit of the schools and (2) school sites are granted the authority to determine how funds are to be expended at the site in the areas of curriculum, instruction, personnel, and capital.

C. Maintenance of governing board oversight of policy development and school-based decentralization activities, including spending decisions, to the extent necessary to ensure that student outcomes and legal requirements are met; the governing board remains as the sole legal entity to contract for district services and to sue or be sued.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECENTRALIZATION

A. Decentralization Committee - There should be a process for selecting members of the Decentralization Committee (DC) of each school which includes provisions for:

1. Adequate and appropriate public information and announcements;

2. Selection of their own representatives by each constituent group, including parents, teachers and other school personnel, students, and community members;

3. Submission of a list of recommended DC members to the governing board for appointment; and

4. Allowing the governing board, for cause, to request a constituent group to submit additional names for appointment to the DC.

B. Participation - There should be a process for each school DC to determine whether or not the school will decentralize and the extent to which it will do so, including the following provisions:

1. If the school DC determines that decentralization ***is not*** necessary, desirable or appropriate, it should set a date to reconsider the issue, no later than one year from the date of the original decision.

2. If the school DC determines that decentralization ***is*** necessary, desirable or appropriate, it should proceed to develop a decentralization plan for the school within an established time frame.

C. The components of the plan should include:

1. **Outcomes to be achieved** by the school through the decentralization process, including those related to the improvement of student achievement.

2. **Definition of powers and duties** for example, the DC could request authority from the governing board to make spending decisions in areas such as curriculum, instruction, and selection, termination and transfer of personnel; the governing board delegates requisite authority, subject to compliance with legal requirements.

3. **A governance structure** for the school which includes the development of bylaws or another type of organizational framework.

4. **An accountability plan** for the school which includes the District Assessment Plan and the Arizona Student Assessment Program, and which provides for review at established intervals, perhaps at least every three school years.

D. Amendments to Decentralization Plan - There should be a requirement that a DC give one year advance notice to the governing board before amending its decentralization plan (1) to assume decision-making authority in an area where such authority had been left with the governing board, or (2) to relinquish duties previously assumed through its decentralization plan.

E. Exceptions

1. A school district of only one school or fewer than 600 students and school districts which are transporting districts should be exempted from mandatory decentralization.

2. Schools currently decentralized should be held harmless for omissions in the decentralization plan requirements outlined in section C above, except for those provisions regarding student achievement and the District Assessment Plan.

F. Noncompliance - The governing board should develop and implement a process for documenting compliance and performance based on the school's accountability plan. The process for addressing issues of unacceptable performance and improvement might include the following:

1. Notification - The governing board (1) notifies a school of areas of deficiency or noncompliance and (2) meets with the DC for the school to show cause why the

governing board should not assume control of the school until it is brought into compliance.

2. Improvement Plan - The school is allowed the opportunity (1) to respond to the concerns of the governing board and, if appropriate, (2) to submit an improvement plan which includes specific time lines.

3. Monitoring Improvement - If the school's performance continues to be unacceptable, the governing board (1) may suspend the authority of the DC and (2) shall have the authority to control decision making at the school level until performance reaches acceptable levels.

4. Reinstating the DC - The governing board may allow the school (1) to reinstate the DC and (2) to submit a revised decentralization plan when performance reaches acceptable levels.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Committee on Decentralization recommends that legislative authority be provided for the establishment of Charter Schools, Contract Schools, New Initiative Schools or similar entities. Upon consideration of previous legislative proposals, the Committee recommends inclusion of the eight elements outlined below:

A. Purpose

The purpose of a Charter School is to provide an alternative learning environment to improve pupil achievement. Charter Schools provide additional choices for pupils and their parents and guardians. A Charter School may be authorized under the sponsorship of one or more governing boards; it may be a magnet school, a vocational or technological school, or some other type of alternative school; it may manifest as a new school or all or any portion of an existing school. A Charter School endeavors to improve pupil achievement in one or more of the following ways:

1. The utilization of different and innovative teaching methods.

2. The establishment of a specialized curriculum.

3. The creation of a new school structure.

4. The creation of different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes.

5. The development of educational programs which encourage innovation and diversity.

B. Application

1. An applicant seeking to establish a Charter School may be a parent, teacher, or school administrator, or an association of one or more such persons.

2. An applicant seeking to establish a Charter School should submit a written application, including the following information, to the local governing board(s):

   a. A description of the purpose(s) of the school and the reasons for its establishment.

   b. A description of the curriculum and the course of instruction.

   c. A description of the population of pupils to be served.

   d. A description of admission policies and procedures.

   e. A description of staffing, including qualifications of instructional and administrative personnel.

   f. A description of support services to be provided by the school and the school district and the method of delivery.

   g. A description of the organizational and management structures, including provisions for involvement of teachers, parents and community members.

   h. A description of the facility and its location.

   i. A description of the extent of community support.

   j. Criteria to measure the school's effectiveness.

   k. A preliminary estimated budget for the development and first year of operation.

   l. A summary of waivers from rules adopted by the state Board of Education to be requested.

   m. A summary of waivers from governing board rules or policies to be requested.

   n. A summary of employee compensation, benefits and rights, if different from those offered generally to employees of the school district, including the right for teachers who choose to teach at a Charter School to return

to the same or a comparable position within the school district within a three-year period of time without a reduction in employment status or benefits.

o. Assurances that the Charter School will not discriminate against applicants for admission based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, income level, disability, race, athletic ability, or geographic location.

p. Assurances that the Charter School will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, disability or race.

q. A copy of the contract or intergovernmental agreement required in section C.1. below.

3. If the local governing board approves the application, the school district may provide assistance to the applicant in developing the detailed plan for the operation of the Charter School. The detailed plan should be developed within 90 days of the local governing board's final approval of the application.

4. If the local governing board rejects the application, the applicant shall be notified in writing of the reasons for the rejection. An applicant may submit a revised proposal for reconsideration by the local governing board. If the application requires additional funding, a local governing board may condition its approval on receipt of this funding from either a grant from the Arizona Department of Education or a private source.

5. If an application is not approved by the local governing board, appeal may be taken to the State Board of Education. If the application is in conformity with statutory requirements, the state Board may approve the application after the applicant has amended such application to include a designation of the legal entity to sue and be sued on behalf of the Charter School. This entity may be a board of trustees or another district governing board which has agreed in writing to act as the governing board for the Charter School.

C. Operation

A Charter School should:

1. Operate under the governance and administrative authority of the local governing board(s) which approved its application or a board of trustees. A comprehensive contractual or intergovernmental agreement should be developed to clarify the following:

a. Ownership of the Charter School's property.

b. Employment of the Charter School employees, including employment contracts and policies and responsibility for employee benefits.

c. Liability for operation of the Charter School, including the right to contract, to sue and be sued.

2. Comply with all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances that are applicable to public schools, including without limitation all federal and state laws relating to the education of exceptional children as defined in A.R.S. § 15-761.

3. Design and maintain a process to encourage parental and community involvement in the school.

4. Participate in the Arizona Student Assessment Program.

5. Submit to financial compliance audits by the state and school district.

6. Function in accordance with the school's detailed plan and contractual or intergovernmental agreement which, upon approval, becomes the charter for operation.

7. Submit the contractual or intergovernmental agreement to the State Board of Education as part of the application process for seeking funds through the Charter Schools Stimulus Fund (see Section H below).

D. Length of Charter Renewal

1. An approved detailed plan for a Charter School could be effective for up to three years from the date of approval and could be renewed at three-year intervals at the request of the Charter School.

2. The local governing board could deny the request for renewal if it is shown that the Charter School has failed to:

a. Implement the approved plan;

b. Improve pupil performance; and/or

c. Comply with federal or state laws.

3. In the event the charter is not renewed, the Charter School could seek sponsorship

from another governing board or seek authorization from the State Board of Education and establish a board of trustees to oversee future operations.

E. Admission Requirements

1. A Charter School should enroll, without payment of tuition, all eligible pupils who submit a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building.

   a. If capacity is not sufficient to enroll all such pupils, preference should be given to pupils who reside in the school district through an equitable selection process such as a lottery.

   b. Transportation should be provided for eligible low-income pupils up to 20 miles each way and for children with disabilities whose individualized education programs require specialized transportation services.

2. Except as provided below, admission should not be limited based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, income level, disability, athletic ability, or geographic location.

3. A Charter School could establish admission criteria as follows:

   a. By age group or grade level.

   b. For pupils who have a specific learning affinity for the school's teaching methods, the school's learning philosophy or a specific subject such as mathematics, science, fine arts, performing arts or a foreign language.

F. Financial Provisions

1. A Charter School sponsored by a school district governing board should receive per pupil expenditures equal to the average cost per pupil for the district as a whole. A school district is not financially responsible for a Charter School authorized by the state Board of Education and sponsored by a board of trustees or another governing board.

2. A Charter School authorized by the state Board and operating under the governance and administrative authority of a board of trustees or another sponsoring governing board should calculate a base support level (A.R.S. § 15-943), a transportation support level (A.R.S. § 15-945), a capital outlay revenue limit (A.R.S. § 15-961), and a capital levy revenue limit (A.R.S. § 15-962) as prescribed in statute, except that:

a. A.R.S. § 15-941 (Teacher Experience Index) and A.R.S. § 15-942 (Adjustment for Rapid Decline) should not apply to Charter Schools.

b. The student count for the first year of operation could be determined initially using an estimated student count based on actual registration of pupils before the beginning of the school year. After the first 100 days in session for the first year of operation, the Charter School could revise the student count to be equal to the actual average daily membership as defined in A.R.S. § 15-901, or the adjusted daily membership as prescribed in A.R.S. § 15-902, of the Charter School. Before the 100th day in session, the state Board could require a Charter School to report periodically regarding pupil enrollment and attendance. A Charter School should revise its student count, base support level, transportation support level, and capital outlay revenue limit before May 15. A Charter School that overestimated its student count should revise its budget before May 15; a Charter School that underestimated its student count could revise its budget before May 15.

c. The transportation support level for the first year of operation could be determined using an estimated transportation support level as prescribed in A.R.S. § 15-945 before the beginning of the school year. After the first 100 days in session for the first year of operation, the Charter School could revise the transportation support level to be equal to the actual transportation support level of the Charter School. Before the 100th day in session the state Board could require a Charter School to report periodically regarding the daily route mileage and the number of eligible students transported. A Charter school that overestimated its transportation support level should revise its budget before May 15; a Charter School that underestimated its transportation support level could revise its budget before May 15.

d. A Charter School authorized by the state Board could utilize A.R.S. § 15-855 (year-round school). The Charter School and the Department of Education would prescribe procedures for determining average daily attendance and average daily membership.

e. Equalization assistance for the Charter School for the budget year should be determined by adding the amount of the base support level, the transportation support level, and the capital outlay revenue limit for the budget year.

f. The State Board of Education should apportion state aid to the state Treasurer for disbursement to each Charter School authorized by the state. The apportionments would be as follows:

1. On July 1, one-third of the total amount to be apportioned during the fiscal year.

2. On each of the following dates, one-twelfth of the total amount to be apportioned during the fiscal year: October 15, December 15, January 15, February 15, March 15, April 15, May 15, June 15.

3. A Charter School authorized by the State Board of Education should not charge tuition, levy taxes, or issue bonds.

G. Transportation Provisions

The school district in which a Charter School is physically located could be considered a nonresident school district with respect to transportation of Charter School pupils.

1. The governing board could provide transportation for Charter School pupils, or it could develop an agreement with another school district, or contract with parents or legal guardians.

2. Parents or legal guardians would be responsible for transportation for resident transfer or nonresident pupils if the governing board does not provide it.

3. The governing board could provide transportation up to an established limit for resident or nonresident pupils with disabilities and whose individualized education plans specify that transportation is necessary.

H. Stimulus Fund

1. A Charter Schools Stimulus Fund should be established in the state treasury for the purpose of (a) assisting in the development of Charter Schools, (b) defraying start-up costs of Charter Schools, and (c) renovating or remodeling existing buildings and structures. The fund could consist of legislative appropriations and gifts, grants, and donations to the State Board of Education for the purpose of assisting Charter Schools. The Arizona Department of Education could administer the fund; the state treasurer would, upon notice from the Arizona Department of Education, invest and divest monies in the fund as provided by A.R.S. § 35-313, and monies earned from investment would be credited to the fund.

2. The State Board of Education should assure that grants to Charter Schools, to the extent practicable, reflect a balance of urban and rural Charter Schools. The State Board of Education should adopt such rules and procedures as are appropriate for the administration of the Charter Schools Stimulus Fund.

3. Nothing in this section should be construed to preclude local governing boards from seeking and using donations and grants from sources other than the Charter Schools Stimulus Fund to cover start-up costs of a Charter School.

AREAS OF CONCERN/DISAGREEMENT

Although members of the Committee on Decentralization agreed without exception that the process of decentralization is a viable option for facilitating meaningful school improvement, they experienced difficulty in attaining agreement and consensus about all aspects of the subject. This section highlights major issues of concern debated by Committee members as well as examples of detailed comments and points of view.

A. Should the process of decentralization be voluntary or mandatory?

1. A basic point of contention and discussion among Committee members centered on whether a decentralization process should be voluntary or mandatory.

   a. Some Committee members raised opposition to state-mandated processes in general.

   b. Some suggested that mandating a process for the consideration of decentralization was not the same as mandating a particular outcome, and that in this case mandating the process would provide an equal opportunity for all school sites to optimize community participation in the decision about decentralization.

   c. Committee members held continuing and lively discussions about the pros and cons of developing and implementing voluntary and mandated programs and processes.

2. One Committee member suggested that school districts be required to involve parents and community members in budget, personnel, and curriculum decisions, noting that this would (a) not require decentralization as a mechanism and (b) is consistent with the Committee's belief that parents and community members should be more involved in the schools. Further, this would strengthen the policy-making authority of governing boards without usurping local responsibility and accountability through prescription of a particular mechanism.

B. Should there be a mechanism for funding decentralized schools?

1. The issue of <u>funding</u> for decentralized schools sparked lively discussion among Committee members. However, the Committee did not reach consensus on this topic, which is closely linked to the discussion about which roles, responsibilities, and authority should be granted to school sites.

2. One Committee member noted that, "Without some stipulation as to a set percentage of the state base-support funding level or specific dollar amount per pupil, decentralized schools could face the very real possibility of not being appropriately funding by the local governing board. At a minimum, districts must be required to fund decentralized sites equal to the average cost per pupil for the district as a whole or in the same manner as other sites within the district."

C. Which entity (governing board, administration, school) should be delegated what roles, responsibilities, and authority?

1. Some Committee members expressed the belief that there is a need to delegate limited powers of contract to school-site councils - for example, allowing schools to hire their own administrators, but maintaining teacher hiring as a function of negotiated district policy, to avoid possible conflict of interest.

2. Others asserted that there should be a role for the local school site in the teacher and staff selection process, noting that if one purpose of decentralization is to create a common vision for the school community, then sharing that vision should be a selection criterion.

3. A major point of contention in the decentralization discussion revolved around whether school-site councils should be advisory with limited powers or granted full decision-making authority.

4. An additional issue concerned the types of decisions the school-site council is authorized to consider; most Committee members agreed that decision making relative to curriculum and instruction was an undisputed role for the school-site council, but were not able to reach consensus about whether or not school sites should take on personnel and budget decisions.

5. One Committee member thought the group's recommendations did not give enough authority to governing boards; another suggested that the policy-making role, rather than the quasi-administrative role, of governing boards should be strengthened.

D. What points in a decentralization plan need to be clarified and addressed for legal purposes?

1. The Committee observed that certain powers and authority are delegated to governing boards by current state laws.

2. Further, it was noted that some legal considerations for schools are derived from federal guidelines attached to particular programs and funds.

E. What is the relationship of the district and the school with respect to policies, goals, and accountability?

One Committee member suggested that common district-wide goals must be considered for decentralization to be successful.

F. Are there special considerations that need to be addressed relative to teachers' employment rights?

1. One Committee member noted that a lack of incentives for teachers to participate in suggested reform activities; another commented that she hoped the opportunity to participate in such activities would be sufficient incentive.

2. Responding to the concern by some of a need to maintain due process for teachers in decentralized and Charter Schools, it was suggested that specific desired protections should be clarified and enumerated, as all teachers are afforded due process by law.

3. One Committee member suggested that, if the purpose of decentralization and Charter Schools is to allow public choice, teachers must accept some economic risks and consequences, meaning that salary, continuing contracts, and work conditions should be negotiated at the local school level.

4. Another Committee member commented that he didn't think any teacher would accept a position in these schools without establishing a comfort level about these issues.

G. Other

1. Some Committee members expressed the belief that there is a need to revamp teacher training by making the Charter Schools internship sites for new teachers.

2. It was suggested that the Arizona Department of Education facilitate bringing together those engaged in decentralization, for purposes of support, collaboration, and input.

APPENDIX A

BARRIERS TO DECENTRALIZATION .

A. Ideas and Opinions Perceived as Barriers to Decentralization

1. The whole system must change or nothing can change.
2. Equity equals sameness.
3. There is satisfaction with the status quo.
4. The attitude that "this too shall pass."

Comments

There is a need to establish ways to support and encourage both equity and quality.

B. State/Structural Barriers to Decentralization

1. There is no state mandate to decentralize.
2. There is no state support for decentralization structurally or financially.
3. The basic financial unit is at the district level.
4. Funding does not follow individual students.

Comments

The following issues must be considered and addressed regardless of the model or structure developed to support decentralization:

1. Creating tolerance for different visions.
2. Balancing rights and responsibilities of all involved.
3. Protecting rights of students, especially of special populations.
4. Maintaining minimum requirements for students.
5. Decentralizing the authority to determine how funds are to be spent in the areas of personnel, curriculum and instruction.
6. Determining who (district or individual school) makes the decision to decentralize.

As a means of supporting decentralization, there is a need to:

1. Continue work on measuring performance against standards, such as the Arizona Student Assessment Program (ASAP).
2. Establish the relationship between school choice and decentralization.

C. District/Procedural Barriers to Decentralization

1. The lack of:

   a. Working models
   b. Definition of terms and roles
   c. Knowledge and information
   d. Communication
   e. Time
   f. Training
   g. Collaborative involvement
   h. Local (district) support and commitment

2. The existence of the following attitudes:

   a. Lack of trust - power/turf issues
   b. Fear of despotism by principal
   c. Jealousy of those who desire to prevent anyone from having what they all cannot have

3. Previous practices and roles inhibit change.

APPENDIX B

SELECTED CHARTS AND GRAPHS FROM THE DECENTRALIZATION SURVEY

Attitudes About Decentralization: A Survey of Arizona Teachers and Principals, Research and Development Division, Arizona Department of Education, September 1993.

TEACHER SURVEY: Influence Over Education Decisions

QUESTION: ***Do you personally feel you have adequate influence over the following issues?***

Teachers Responding: 1,072	Yes	No
Classroom Issues		
a. selection of core instructional material?	67.1%	32.9%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught?	74.2%	25.8%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught?	82.7%	17.3%
d. grading paradigm or system?	60.1%	39.9%
e. discipline of students?	66.0%	34.0%
f. use of physical classroom space?	73.7%	26.3%
Schoolwide Issues		
g. subject/class assignments?	75.4%	24.6%
h. hiring of teachers?	27.6%	72.4%
i. hiring of administrative personnel?	15.6%	84.4%
j. promotion of personnel?	15.6%	84.4%
k. allocation of funds within your school?	23.0%	77.0%
l. determination of teacher salaries in your school?	15.3%	84.7%
m. length of class periods?	41.0%	59.0%
n. length of the school day?	29.2%	70.8%

QUESTION: ***Overall, do you believe you have the authority to make decisions that maximize your ability to teach students?***

Yes	No
70.2%	29.8%

PRINCIPAL SURVEY: Influence Over Education Decisions

QUESTION: ***Do you personally feel you have adequate influence over the following issues?***

Principals Responding: 531	Yes	No
a. selection of core instructional material?	78.0%	22.0%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught?	78.0%	22.0%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught?	77.7%	22.3%
d. grading paradigm or system?	66.7%	33.3%
e. discipline of students?	90.9%	9.1%
f. organization and use of physical plant?	83.6%	16.4%
g. mission and goals of school?	92.7%	7.3%
h. hiring of personnel?	83.9%	16.1%
i. evaluation of personnel?	87.5%	12.5%
j. promotion of personnel?	61.2%	38.8%
k. allocation of funds within your school?	70.7%	29.3%
l. determination of salaries in your school?	30.4%	69.6%
m. length of class periods?	82.1%	17.9%
n. length of the school day?	56.6%	43.4%
o. organization of transport for students?	54.0%	46.0%

QUESTION: ***Overall, do you believe you have the authority to make decisions that maximize the ability of students in your school to learn?***

Yes	No
80.2%	19.8%

TEACHER SURVEY: Perceptions of Who Should Influence Education

QUESTION: ***In your opinion, which group(s) SHOULD have the most influence in decisions made concerning the following classroom and schoolwide issues?***

Teachers Responding: 1,072	State Board/Dept. of Ed.	District Office/Supt.	Local School Board	Principal	Teachers	Parents/Community	School-site Committee
Classroom Issues							
a. selection of core instructional material	13%	23%	16%	35%	***91%***	30%	35%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught	17%	23%	15%	35%	***92%***	27%	29%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught	5%	14%	6%	29%	***96%***	11%	23%
d. grading paradigm or system	2%	20%	12%	42%	***89%***	21%	26%
e. discipline of students	1%	12%	13%	80%	***87%***	36%	19%
f. use of physical classroom space	0%	8%	4%	51%	***92%***	5%	20%
Schoolwide Issues							
g. subject/class assignments	1%	10%	5%	70%	***86%***	8%	19%
h. hiring of teachers	2%	35%	21%	***86%***	53%	8%	29%
i. hiring of administrative personnel	3%	***53%***	48%	31%	49%	16%	27%
j. promotion of personnel	1%	56%	34%	***59%***	35%	6%	25%
k. allocation of funds within your school	2%	22%	14%	***74%***	72%	14%	41%
l. determination of teacher salaries in your school	6%	43%	48%	29%	***62%***	10%	25%
m. length of class periods	6%	21%	18%	58%	***75%***	12%	31%
n. length of the school day	15%	31%	26%	50%	***63%***	16%	29%

NOTE: Since as many as three (3) responses were allowed per respondent, row totals exceed 100%.
Bold-italicized items received the largest majority of responses, give or take one percentage point.
Shaded items received a smaller response than in Table 1-H.

PRINCIPAL SURVEY: Perceptions of Who Should Influence Education

QUESTION: ***In your opinion, which group(s) SHOULD have the most influence in decisions made concerning the following issues?***

Principals Responding: 531	State Board/Dept. of Ed.	District Office/Supt.	Local School Board	Principal	Teachers	Parents/Community	School-site Committee
a. selection of core instructional material	7%	27%	23%	67%	***82%***	35%	31%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught	11%	25%	22%	67%	***83%***	35%	30%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught	4%	22%	13%	71%	***90%***	19%	26%
d. grading paradigm or system	1%	19%	18%	73%	***86%***	33%	33%
e. discipline of students	0%	19%	23%	***85%***	76%	41%	33%
f. organization and use of physical plant	0%	32%	20%	***92%***	52%	20%	32%
g. mission and goals of school	0%	12%	20%	***80%***	76%	51%	37%
h. hiring of personnel	1%	39%	22%	***95%***	47%	9%	25%
i. evaluation of personnel	0%	34%	17%	***95%***	28%	5%	12%
j. promotion of personnel	0%	58%	31%	***85%***	18%	4%	16%
k. allocation of funds within your school	1%	29%	18%	***89%***	56%	13%	39%
l. determination of salaries in your school	2%	***61%***	***60%***	45%	27%	4%	17%
m. length of class periods	4%	20%	15%	***83%***	71%	20%	33%
n. length of the school day	9%	32%	28%	***73%***	57%	24%	29%
o. organization of transport for students	2%	***79%***	34%	54%	12%	10%	14%

NOTE: Since as many as three (3) responses were allowed per respondent, row totals exceed 100%.
Bold-italicized items received the largest majority of responses, give or take one percentage point.
Shaded items received a smaller response than in Table 1-I.

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TEACHER SURVEY: The Best Interests of Students and Site-Based Decision Making

QUESTION: ***Student interests would be best served if the following decisions were made at the school site...***

Teachers Responding: 1,072	Disagree	Agree
Classroom Issues		
a. selection of core instructional material?	20.5%	79.5%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught?	19.1%	80.9%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught?	11.5%	88.5%
d. grading paradigm or system?	18.1%	81.9%
e. discipline of students?	7.4%	92.6%
f. use of physical classroom space?	5.0%	95.0%
Schoolwide Issues		
g. subject/class assignments?	7.0%	93.0%
h. hiring of teachers?	18.7%	81.3%
i. hiring of administrative personnel?	31.1%	68.9%
j. promotion of personnel?	33.6%	66.4%
k. allocation of funds within your school?	12.9%	87.1%
l. determination of teacher salaries in your school?	43.4%	56.6%
m. length of class periods?	14.2%	85.8%
n. length of the school day?	23.9%	76.1%

PRINCIPAL SURVEY: The Best Interests of Students and Site-Based Decision Making

QUESTION: ***Student interests would be best served if the following decisions were made at the school site...***

Principals Responding: 531	Disagree	Agree
a. selection of core instructional material?	26.3%	73.7%
b. content, topics and skills that are taught?	24.4%	75.6%
c. sequence in which content, topics and skills are taught?	17.2%	82.8%
d. grading paradigm or system?	18.5%	81.5%
e. discipline of students?	15.1%	84.9%
f. organization and use of physical plant?	13.9%	86.1%
g. mission and goals of school?	7.9%	92.1%
h. hiring of personnel?	14.9%	85.1%
i evaluation of personnel?	12.3%	87.7%
j. promotion of personnel?	28.5%	71.5%
k. allocation of funds within your school?	13.7%	86.3%
l. determination of salaries in your school?	60.0%	40.0%
m. length of class periods?	14.9%	85.1%
n. length of the school day?	29.0%	71.0%
o. organization of transport for students?	56.7%	43.3%